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## A DESIGNER OF PAPER HANGINGS. AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. WALTER CRANE.

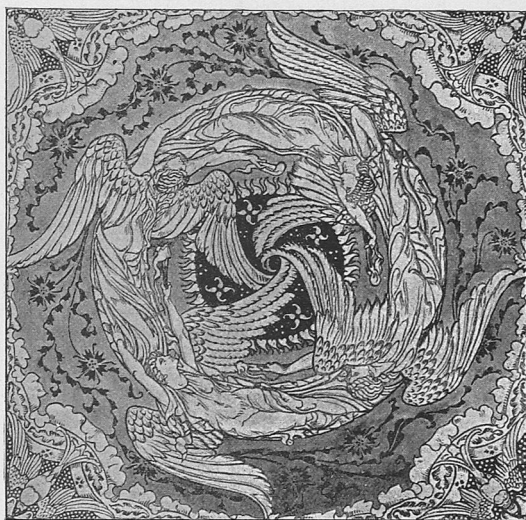
BY AYMER VALLANCE, in *The Studio*.

**T**HE home in Shepard's Bush having been given up after Mr. Walter Crane returned from his visit to America, it was necessary to seek a fresh abode. A suitable house, which joined the advantage of a more central position to the possession of the indispensable garden, was eventually taken in Holland street, Kensington; and there, when I called, he received me in his study, the studio being some little distance off, in the region of Notting Hill.

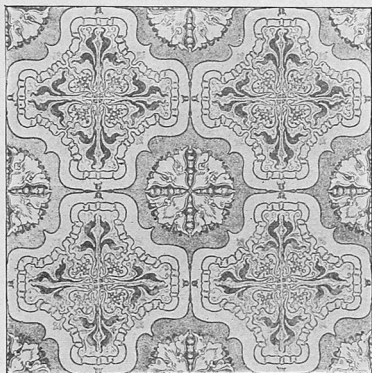
"When did it first occur to you," I asked, "to design wall papers; and how did it come about?"

"It was briefly thus. My nursery papers grew out of my nursery books; from the nursery paper to those for general use was but a step, and one that followed naturally enough. In the end, the number of papers I have designed for general purposes has far exceeded that of the nursery papers. It was in 1874 that Messrs. Jeffrey & Co. invited me to prepare a cartoon for a nursery paper as far as might be in the manner of my illustrated toy-books, a certain number of which, as you are aware, had then already appeared. This first paper comprised three groups of pictures illustrative of popular nursery rhymes—Little Boy

entitled *The Fairy Garden*, being founded on my book '*Flora's Feast*.' The nursery papers, although the other series have been coming out simultaneously from almost the beginning, form a distinct class from the rest, not only on account of their subjects and the purpose for which they are intended, but because they are of a cheaper quality, being uniformly pro-



"FOUR WINDS" CEILING PAPER. FROM THE ORIGINAL CARTOON.



"HAMMERSMITH" CEILING PAPER.

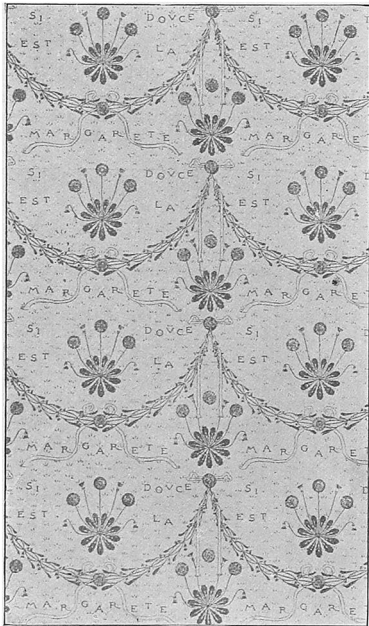
Blue, Sing a Song of Sixpence, etc. It was issued in 1875 and was succeeded by the Humpty Dumpty paper in 1876, the Froggy would a-Wooing Go in 1877, and the Sleeping Beauty in 1879. After a certain interval—that is to say, in 1886—Messrs. Jeffrey & Co. brought out another nursery paper from my design, *The House that Jack Built*; and lastly, in 1890, one

duced by machine printing; whereas the other papers—those, for general use—are all printed with hand-blocks."

"What is the date of the earliest of this second series?"

"It was issued in 1876, the year after the first of the nursery papers, the occasion being furnished by the Philadelphia Exhibition. It is named *La Margarete* from the subject of the field, taken from "*The Flower and the Leaf*," a poem ascribed to Chaucer. The frieze is a set of six figures, including the God of Love, with *Alceste* and allegorical personages, so placed as to form caryatids. I also provided as an alternative frieze, a design of doves. The dado is of lily plants and doves; while a ceiling paper of doves with olive branches, a somewhat rigid design divided into squares, completes the set. In 1878, with a view to the Paris Exhibition, a successful experiment was made in the shape of an embossed and gilt leather paper from my design, of peacocks and amorini, with a frieze of peacocks, their tails outspread, alternating with winged figures, holding sickles in their hands. The same year witnessed the production of the almond blossom and swallow frieze with the paper of wall-flowers and of falling petals of almond blossoms. In 1880 appeared a staircase paper, a set pattern of hounds, hunting-horns, cocks and doves, etc., to carry out the idea of awakening day; and also the rose decoration, of which the field was made out of the briar-rose branches of the *Sleeping Beauty* design

of the previous year, by omitting the figures and filling in the sprays; while the frieze and dado consisted of garden-rose plants with cupids' heads, hearts and arrows, arranged in panels. One's art, no doubt, passes through various stages, and if you care to classify my work, you may regard the wood-notes design, with its intricacy of detail, and what Mr. Lewis F. Day calls its tapestry-like quality of color, as marking a fresh phase, compared with what had gone before. The size and prominence of the fallow deer and pursuing hounds were alone sufficient to be remarked as a new departure. But that was not all. I had introduced human shapes, it is true, in the Alcestis, the Mermaid and other friezes, and in all my nursery papers, and also there were amorini in the embossed paper of 1878. But hitherto my ambition had not tempted me to repeat the figure on so large a scale in the field. The Wood Notes



FIELD OF "THE MARGARETE" WALL PAPER.

wall paper and frieze were issued in 1886, and followed, in 1887, by a large design, with many analogous features, called The Golden Age, executed in embossed leather paper. For the Paris Exhibition of 1889 was brought out my Peacock Garden, with its frieze of white peacocks."

"Ah! that is a magnificent design; no mere background, but a complete decoration in itself. It is out of the question to hang pictures on a wall papered with the Peacock Garden, except when printed in low tones of color, or when treated in raised material in the manner of an old embossed leather. Moreover, the pattern is of such a size that it cannot be seen to advantage except in large halls, hotels, public buildings, and such like."

"Yes; I believe it has been used mainly for purposes of that sort. To continue: in 1890 appeared another elaborate paper (field and frieze) called Corona Vitæ. Belonging to it is the Four Winds ceiling, the drawing of which, I remember, required particular pains and care."

"In 1891," resumed Mr. Crane,

"was brought out the Cockatoo decorations, so called from the distinguishing feature in the field, which also includes peacocks, squirrels, irises and pomegranates, the two last named forming the basis of the ornament of the Hammer-smith ceiling which goes together with it. For the Chicago Exhibition in 1893 I designed the Trio decoration, the specialty of which are the pilaster strips by which the field may be divided into panels. The scheme is an elaborate one with allegorical figures in the pilasters, while the principal features in the frieze are starlings, irises, etc.; and in the field, which is a net pattern, are alternate apple and pomegranate trees growing out of tripod-supported vases and flanked by peacocks arranged in pairs. The latest papers published show perhaps a return to a similar mode of treatment—viz., the Seed and Flower wall paper and the Juno ceiling, the latter founded on the form of an outspread palm-leaf. The most recent papers (indeed, they are not yet issued) are the Pomegranate and Teazle and the Lily and Rose, respectively. There, I think you have a tolerably complete list of my wall papers; at any rate, I have not forgotten any design of importance."

"Thank you. And now do you mind telling me whether, at the time of giving you a commission, your manufacturers restrict you in any way or indicate to you at all the sort of scheme they would prefer to have worked out for the next season's paper? Do they, for instance, suggest a limit for the repeat, whether the design shall consist of field and frieze, or field alone; whether it shall include human figures as well as birds, beasts, and flowers, or be confined to floral forms alone, and so on?"

"Well, yes, they do not infrequently propose a motif, but all the same they leave me quite free to take my own line of treating it. And somehow or other I find the idea develops itself in the working, sometimes beyond all recognition, so when the result comes to be laid before him, that it has turned out something entirely different from what he had anticipated. I should say, however, that of late they have begun rather to urge me to adopt a broader effect and severer methods; hence you will observe that the two most recent papers, which they have in hand for the coming season, are produced with no more than four blocks apiece, quite a moderate number for me."

"Have you designed paper hangings for any manufacturers besides Messrs. Jeffrey & Co.?"

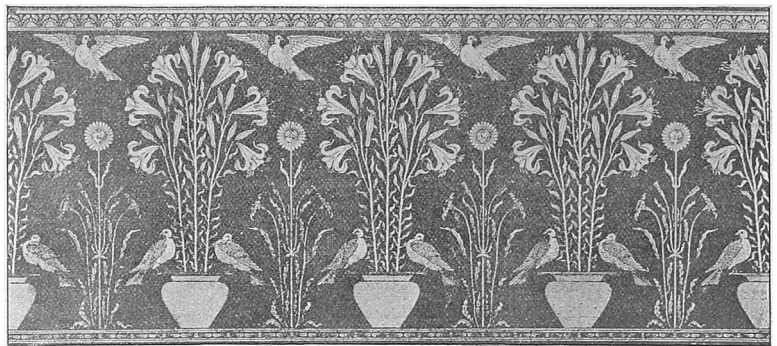
"They are the only paper-stainers for whom I have designed in this country, but I have recently supplied a design for an American firm."

"For wall-paper printing have they in America any different processes from those which we employ?"

"No; their methods and ours are the same—the roller for machine printing, and the block for hand printing."

"I have noticed, Mr. Crane, that many of your cartoons are comparatively rough and sketchy. That must surely make the blockcutter's task a difficult one?"

"That may be; but in translating it into a more finished form one's original conception is so apt to lose vigor and character. And fortunately for me, Messrs. Jeffrey & Co.'s blockcutters are among the most skilled in their craft. Moreover, their manager is a man of taste and judgment, who spares no



DADO OF "THE MARGARETE" WALL PAPER.

pains to get the proper effect of a pattern. The best design may develop unforeseen defects when executed in the mass; and the art lies not so much in detecting them as in the ready resource which is able to devise a remedy. For instance, a pattern will perhaps come out hard and stiff in the printing, and some such device as over-printing parts of it with a wash tint, or otherwise according to circumstances, may be the only thing needful for pulling a pattern together—may, in fact, prove to be the making of the thing."

"What do you say of the relative merits of the craft in the two countries, England and America?"

"In my opinion, we are decidedly superior. In the case of



"WOOD NOTES" FRIEZE.

the design I made for an American order the blockcutters out there had serious misgivings as to whether they should be able to execute my cartoon; and so I had to furnish a duplicate set of drawings in black and white, with sharp lines, and all in exact precision for the guidance of the cutters."

"What was the design in question?"

"It was one that was drawn specially with a view to exhibition at Chicago. The scheme comprised allegorical figures, ships, etc., representing the four quarters of the globe."

"That sounds as though it was rather elaborate."

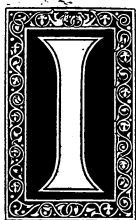
"Well, not more so than the majority of my designs for Messrs. Jeffrey & Co. Speaking generally, it does not seem to have been worth anyone's while in America to cultivate the art of wall-paper design and manufacture as we have done in this country."

"What of such artists as Mr. Tiffany or Mr. John La Farge? Are they not general decorators?"

"Yes; and of course, like our English decorative artists, they undertake various branches of design, paper hangings among others, I believe; but these men are exceptions to the ordinary rule, and the whole thing is on a totally different footing in America. With them decoration appears to be simply and solely a matter of business, and the American artists themselves regard and speak of it as such quite frankly."

### CARING FOR THE WINDOWS.

BY A. ASHMUN KELLY.



IF necessary to economize in some direction when building the home, let it not be on the windows. There is nothing that makes the exterior so attractive as beautiful plate glass windows, nor is more real pleasure and satisfaction derived from any part of the building than from that of the well-constructed and lighted window. The window is the eye of the house, and as a bright, beautiful eye in a human being makes even a homely face attractive, so does a beautiful window beautify the entire house, however humble its construction. And what more trying to the eyes and to the patience than lights of glass that are full of imperfections? Just now window glass is very cheap, and the lowest priced house ought to have at least the best double thick window glass in its windows all over the house. This is economy,

too, because the greater thickness insures more largely against breakage. In the lower or first floor rooms, except the kitchen, plate glass might be afforded by persons of limited means. They are so strong and durable, and withal so bright and rich-looking, that no one can regret putting them in. The cost of plate glass is not great. The French and domestic glasses are the same in price, at this writing, and while there is a difference in the two kinds, it is of no material consequence, and only an expert can detect it. You could not. The American plate glass is of a silvery white color, due to its being made with natural gas, while the foreign is greenish, being made with coal. Put side by side, no difference is at all noticeable. I mention these things for the guidance of amateur builders, so that they may not be deceived into believing that the foreign glass is the best, and the more expensive because the best.

A handsome pane of glass is as much deserving of care as a picture, and it is as easily injured at the hands of a careless cleaner. Nowadays people who can afford it employ the regular window-cleaning concerns which make a specialty of this business. The cost varies according to the number and character of windows to be cared for. It reaches in some cases as high as \$15 and \$25 a month. But it is economical where fine, costly windows are concerned, because the expert cleaner does the work perfectly, while the servant is apt to break, scratch or imperfectly clean the glass, besides which he or she is apt to fall from a window and make an unpleasant sensation.

To clean a window seems a simple operation. It is, too, but



"WOOD NOTES" WALL PAPER.

one must know how to do the work. A cloudy day is the best time to do the cleaning, or a day that is clear and dry, so that the sun does not strike the glass, and which would cause it to dry in streaks. Clean, soft water in abundance, plenty of clean and soft old rags, and a leather or chamois skin; these are necessary. Wash the windows down quickly, inside and out, and dry with the rags. Begin inside, finish outside. Some people use the leather for washing with. A little ammonia in the water is helpful where there is smoke, but be careful not to get too much in the water, as it will injure the paint. A wet day is bad for window cleaning; a frosty one is worse. For common windows, say upstairs, kitchen, etc., a washing down with ammonia (least bit) and water, and washing off with clear,